

Southern HDs Landscape Restoration Project Public Scoping/Issues Summary

December 2020

This document addresses the public comments received during a scoping period which occurred during September and October 2020, for the Southern HDs Landscape Restoration Project. Scoping input was received as a result of a press release, and letters and e-mails to adjacent landowners and subdivisions, those who had previously expressed interest in the project, and other parties that could be affected by the proposal. The Forest Service presented a preliminary proposed action during this timeframe.

The scoping period generated responses from 40 external sources (Table 2); internal scoping is also part of the planning process. The Forest Service typically separates scoping comments into two groups: *Issues* and *Non-Issues*. *Issues* are defined as concerns or suggestions that could directly or indirectly result from implementing the proposed action. An issue also may result in the generation of an alternative, part of an alternative, design criteria, or mitigation measure which specifically addresses that issue. The purpose of identifying issues at this stage of the analysis is to define the scope of the analysis and ensure that important concerns or opportunities are not overlooked.

Classification of a comment as a *Non-Issue* does not mean it is not important, it only means that it does not meet the above definition and will not be addressed in this analysis. *Non-Issues* fall within several general categories, with examples given:

- 1) Outside the scope of the proposed action or irrelevant to the decision to be made;
 - Requests for information or clarification.
 - Requests to be added to the mailing list or providing address updates.
 - Matters not under the authority of the Forest Service.
 - Comments regarding lack of enforcement and/or implementation of decisions; these are administrative and/or budgetary matters and do not change the decision to be made.
 - Comments or concerns regarding unrelated activities; for this project, this includes term grazing permits or oil and gas development.
- 2) Already decided by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher level decision;
 - NEPA processes, NFMA requirements, Executive Orders, and the Colorado Roadless Rule are already defined in Forest Service policy and guidance and will be followed.
 - Suggestions for what should be included in the EA analysis (e.g.- analysis of vegetation impacts, analysis of impacts to watershed, analysis of impacts to roadless areas, etc) are standard procedures and will be included.
- 3) Opinion, conjectural, and not supported by scientific or factual evidence; or
 - A “vote” for or against a proposed action or alternative with no supporting rationale; this does not provide us with issues to be addressed or ideas for alternatives.
- 4) Purely supportive of, included in, or addressed by, the Proposed Action.
 - Statements that make suggestions for what is already included in the Proposed Action.
 - Statements of support for the proposal that do not result in the need to create an alternative.

There were recurring Issues Themes mentioned throughout many of the comments, listed in the Table 1 below. Full text of the comments can be found in the project record. An Environmental Assessment will be prepared. The Issues will be responded to and analyzed in either an alternative or design criteria/mitigation measures in the EA. A 30-day public comment period will be held for public review of the pre-decisional draft EA.

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Table 1. Summary of Issues

Issue Theme	Specific Issue/Comment	Where Addressed
1. Mechanical Vegetation Mgt.	Not all veg types should be treated the same – the HDs are very diverse	*4 Rivers Collaborative Meetings *EA- Desired Conditions; Proposed Action & Design Criteria; Social Concerns & Vegetation Sections;
	Coordinate with 4 Rivers Collaborative to determine desired conditions	
	Protect old growth	
	Use timber sales to create younger, healthier trees	
	Weeds will increase from operations and from OHV trail	
2. Prescribed Fire	Let natural fires burn within established firelines	*EA- Proposed Action & Design Criteria; Social Concerns & Vegetation Sections *Burn Plan
	Coordinate with powerline companies	
	Armstrong/Trail/Long Canyons are too dangerous for Rx fire- because of topography, smoke, drought	
	Use permanent fire line to increase efficiency and reduce cost of fire fighting	
	OHV trail will increase risk of fire caused by motorized vehicles in dry grass	
	Smoke impacts neighbors' health	
3. Impacts to Adjacent Landowners	OHV trail would be noisy	*Consultation with County Roads Dept. *Discussions with SUIT *EA- Alternatives; Design Criteria; Social Concerns & Recreation Sections *Burn Plan
	OHV trail will increase potential trespass on adjacent private land	
	Rx fire will reduce risk of fire on private property	
	OHV trail will increase traffic and parking congestion on CR 525	
	Smoke impacts neighbors' health	
3. Recreation	Expand motorized opportunities – connecting two trail systems makes sense	*EA- Alternatives; Recreation Section
	Motorized use would be a safety conflict with horseback riders who currently use the area	
	Full Travel Management planning process should be done for new OHV trail	
	Trail could improve relationships with motorized community	
4. Roadless Area	No more motorized use in roadless	*Consultation with CO DNR *EA- Alternatives; Colorado Roadless Area Section
	No tree cutting allowed in roadless	
5. Wildlife	Habitat will be more fragmented by new trail – migration route, fawning, winter range	*Consultation with CPW *EA- Proposed Action & Design Criteria; Wildlife Section
	Thinning will improve forage	
	Thin shrubs and P-J to increase grasses	

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<u>Issue Theme</u>	<u>Specific Issue/Comment</u>	<u>Where Addressed</u>
	Introduce cool season grasses	
6. Soils	Soils are too erosive for more motorized use	*EA- Design Criteria; Watershed/Soils Section
7. Cultural Resources	HD's have a lot of cultural sites that should be protected	*Tribal and SHPO Consultation *EA- Design Criteria; Cultural Section

Table 2. List of Commenters

<u>Last Name</u>	<u>First Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>
Basse	Gina	
Beebe	John	
Beebe	Terry	Deer Valley Estates Property Owners' Assoc.
Blaisdell	Judy	
Buickerood	Jimbo	San Juan Citizens Alliance
Cundiff	Brooke	Grazing Permittee
Eby	Russ	
Ferguson	Tammy	
Ferguson	Bryan	
Fitzgerald	Janine	
Fitzgerald	Theresa	
Fitzgerald	Jim	
Fundingsland	Jean	
Honea	David	
Hoselton	Dawn	
Jakoby	Leslie	La Plata County
Johnson	Donald	
Johnson	Diane	
Jurgens	Steven	
Jurgens	Janet	
Leiker	Diana	Tri-State Generation and Transmission Assoc.
Libit	Conor	
Libit	Carolyn	
Libit	Jerome	
Mingo	Dennis	Pagosa Trail Riders
Mueller	Barbara	Grazing Permittee

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Last Name	First Name	Affiliation
Neill	Scott	
Neill	Janet	
O'Donnell	Maureen	
Pargin	Steve	Grazing Permittee
Schell	Lauri and John	
Schultz	Bill	
Sprague	Nick	
Valenti	Paul	
Vance	Julie	
Walker	Johnnie	La Plata Electric Assoc.
Wiler	Jim	
Wilkinson	Gary	San Juan Trail Riders
Williams	Jeanne	
Yost	Michelle	